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MRS. MARY DAVIES.

As there are many of our English tenors and basses who owe their good fortune to the cathedral, so are there many of our Welsh female vocalists who are indebted to the chapel for early opportunities of cultivating the art. It was in the Welsh Chapel at Soho that Mary Davies, then twelve years old, first appeared on a platform to sing in public, the occasion being a "social meeting," at which the young people joined the elder members of the congregation in the performance of music. But Mary Davies was by no means unprepared for that interesting event, since she had been for three years acquiring a knowledge of the elements of music, and especially of sight-singing, in the class taught by her father, who as Precentor of the chapel was held responsible for the tuneful character of the Sunday services. Though busily occupied at that time in rearing for himself a reputation as a sculptor—a reputation that will surely endure as long as marble reflects the features of the high-minded politician, the late Henry Richard, M.P.—yet Mr. Davies found time to devote to the art of music. And in fulfilling in London the duties of Precentor, was he not following with pride in the footsteps of his father, who led for a long period the singing at the large chapel in Merthyr?

The meritorious effort of his little daughter, Mary, at the "meeting" referred to opened up a prospect before him full of hope as to her career; and with the prospect came to both father and mother a sense of the responsibility which it laid upon them. Many, doubtless, were the conferences held by the parents anxious that the gifts bounteous nature had bestowed upon the girl should not suffer at their hands from misdirection. After personally superintending her musical education for two years longer, Mrs. Davies consulted the late Mr. Brindley Richards as to the proper course to pursue in order that her daughter may eventually attain proficiency as a pianist. She did not seek in vain, for on hearing the girl play, he, with that generous sympathy which distinguished him when brought into contact with youthful talent, volunteered to give the little aspirant pianoforte lessons every week. Greatly pleased with her progress as well as with her general intelligence, he one day asked her to sing to him; and finding her voice remarkably sweet in tone, he expressed in language indicating surprise a most favourable opinion of her vocal ability. Her talents in this direction soon revealed themselves in a manner so decided as to induce such eminent vocalists as Miss Edith Wynne and Mrs. Megan Watts Hughes to lend their aid in developing the vocal faculty.

When Mary Davies had entered upon her sixteenth year, the improvement in her voice, and in the method of using it, was so great as to determine her kind master, Mr. Brindley Richards, to place her name in the programme of a concert he was giving at the Hanover Square Rooms. The piece chosen for her *début* was Haydn's song, "My mother bids me bind my hair," which, in spite of nervousness, was rendered with so much charm as to secure instant and unanimous public favour. About this time Mary Davies won in competition a scholarship founded in connection with the Royal Academy of Music, by Mr. John Thomas (Pencerdd Gwalia), for the benefit of girl members of the Welsh Choral Union, of which society he was conductor. Thus enabled for three consecutive years to receive at the Academy the training needed for the equipment of an artist, Mary Davies had upon the subject but one thought, and that was to profit by advantages placed within her reach. Selecting singing, as her chief study, she became the pupil

of Signor Randegger, the most successful singing-master of the day. Indeed, unremitting attention to her studies brought her health into danger; but, happily, there was ever at hand a mother's care and help to ward off the peril.

During the first year of her studentship, Mary Davies was appointed to sing at the concerts of the Royal Academy, her first piece in that capacity being Schubert's "Erl King;" she also sang at that time at a Welsh festival in Covent Garden, held in connection with Rivière's Promenade Concerts. In this early stage of her career, Mary Davies was received at Welsh Eisteddfodau with all the honours accorded a representative national singer; and that applause which greeted her advent has not lessened in enthusiasm was convincingly demonstrated at the Eisteddfod held last month at Bangor. Having in good time gained the bronze medal, Mary Davies was in her second year at the Academy decorated by the Princess Louise, who on that occasion dispensed the prizes at St. James's Hall, with the silver medal, an honour of which she proved herself worthy by singing before the distinguished assembly a manuscript song, "My heart is heavy," composed by one of her fellow students. In her third year she gained the Parepa-Rosa gold medal, besides winning Christine Nilsson's £20 prize. These rewards and other advantages induced Mary Davies to remain a student for two years longer at the Academy.

Towards the close of her fourth year at the Institution Mary Davies received an offer to sing at one of the ballad concerts; and so highly was she then appreciated by the public, that Mr. Bookey at once extended her engagement to the remaining performances of the series—an engagement which has ever since been renewed from year to year. At these concerts she has introduced ballads, such as Marzial's "Twickenham Ferry," and Hartog's "Swing," which have become exceedingly popular; yet old songs, such as "The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington," "Jock o' Hazeldean," and the "Ash Grove," have not been neglected. But the fair singer's genius has not been expended upon those pleasing works to the exclusion of pieces of a higher grade. Perhaps her greatest successes have been made in such themes as Mendelssohn's "Hear my Prayer," Spohr's "As Pants the Hart," and Bennett's "Dawn, gentle Flower."

Though best known as a ballad singer, Mary Davies has gathered laurels in the higher branches of the art. At concerts of the late Sacred Harmonic Society, at Exeter Hall; at festivals of Worcester, Gloucester, and Chester; at performances of sacred music at Liverpool, Leeds, Bradford, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, and other places, she has proved herself an oratorio singer of excellence. On leaving the Royal Academy of Music, Mary Davies was elected an associate, and in 1882 a Royal Academician. In 1887 she had the honour of being appointed by the Principal, the late Sir George Macfarren, to distribute at St. James's Hall the Academy medals and prizes of the session. On the 22nd of March, 1888, Mary Davies was married to Mr. William Cadwaladr Davies, Secretary and Registrar of the University College for North Wales.

CURRENT NOTES.

ALTHOUGH the sound of many voices and instruments was on Tuesday morning, the 9th ult., bidding us enter the Cathedral of Worcester to take part in the opening performance of the musical festival, yet we were constrained to remain awhile from the feast, in spite of the



call of the "loud bassoon" and its fellow summoners. It was no garrulous mariner that kept us outside the well-guarded door, but the ancient Sun, whose glittering eye held us in rapt attention. From out the unstained firmament the eye of the universe was fixed upon the earth, and so piercing was the gaze that shelter was sought in the shadows of the high cathedral tower wedged, as it were, into the near blue sky. For the moment we wished for the festival to perform its rites in the open, in order that the beauties of art might be blended with the glories of nature, that the soul might, through eye and ear, be brought into contact with perfect and all-prevailing harmony. For some time we busied ourselves with following the course of the musician's book undergoing interpretation at the hands of the orchestra inside the church, and with simultaneously reading the rich postscript of Summer's letter now laid before us. And it was not until the potent strain, "Rise up, arise, rise and shine," that, overcome with heat and fatigue, we sought rest in the nave of the cathedral.

Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* was now inaugurating the 167th "meeting of the three choirs"—a duty that his *Elijah* had for so long a period fulfilled. Naturally, the listener was soon busy with instituting comparisons between the two oratorios, with the result that *St. Paul* gained in favour. No one, indeed, could withhold admiration from the choral music that on this occasion was rendered in a style approaching perfection. Nor could warm approval be denied the instrumental themes, played, as they were, with the utmost skill by the orchestra. In singing the aria, "Be thou faithful unto death," Mr. Edward Lloyd placed those in a sorry plight who sought occupation for the critical faculty, since every phrase and every tone carried with it instant conviction of its truth and beauty. The playing of the 'cello obbligato by Mr. Edward Howell was entitled to unqualified praise. The other soloists were Madame Albani, Miss Damian, and Mr. Plunket Greene. On the first evening of the festival the performance of the cantata, *The Last Night at Bethany*, took place in the cathedral. Written last year by Mr. Joseph Bennett, and composed by Mr. Lee Williams, this work has now fully established its claim to an honourable place in the programme of a Church festival. What, indeed, could be more appropriate for such a gathering than the pathetic text which the musician has illustrated by themes at once tender and solemn? Haydn was called upon to contribute the first and second parts of his oratorio, *The Creation*. As a poor relation the father of the modern orchestra was allowed at the closing of the day to occupy the seat nearest the door.

Mozart, when composing music to the sublime *Requiem* of the Catholic Church, would now and again interrupt his labours with lamentations that in carrying out the instructions of the "mysterious stranger" who had commissioned him to write the work, he was preparing strains for his own burial. If no "mysterious stranger" was concerned in the appointment of the *Requiem* down for performance just as the announcement was made of Canon Liddon's death, there was, for all that, something strange in the fact that means on the instant should have been forthcoming to give expression to the deep sorrow of the assembly gathered together on that morning in the cathedral. Mozart's masterpiece was followed by Beethoven's Symphony in C minor, which, being magnificently interpreted, made a deep impression upon the auditors, who, doubtless, did not trouble themselves with the enquiry, "Is this sacred or secular music?" It will, however, be prudent of the committee to exercise caution in admitting symphonies into their cathedral selections. They should understand that one of the symphonic movements owes its origin to the dance, and the characteristics thereof are generally observed by composers. Will it not show weakness in the authorities to usher secular music in at one door of the Church whilst driving it out at another? The secular concert has been banished from the hall in the southern precincts, while the symphony, one of its most important features, is brought through the northern porch into the midst of the consecrated building. At the evening concert, held in the public hall, Dr. Parry's ode, *St. Cecilia's Day*, and Mr. Edward Elgar's new overture,

Froissart, were performed with success. On this occasion the social character of the festival asserted itself. When the "meeting" becomes altogether sacerdotal, it will then be necessary for "society" to establish some other and more suitable form of festivity. Time was when the evenings were by the committee devoted to song and dance; soon it will be choral service or nothing.

On Thursday morning the oratorio, *The Repentance of Nineveh*, by Mr. Joseph Bennett and Dr. Bridge, was performed for the first time in public. The materials at the command of the librettist were few, but those available were made the most of, and supplemented by passages of Scripture so skilfully interwoven with the main subject as to form a story of interest. Each of the four principal characters—the Prophet Jonah, the King of Assyria, his Queen, and the Princess, their daughter—is invested with a striking individuality manifested in the part each takes in carrying on the action of the piece. In the first scene Jonah appears before the victorious king and his court to utter the prediction that in forty days Nineveh shall be overthrown; in the second, the prophet, sitting under the gourd, is lamenting that the thirty-ninth day is passing away without any sign of the destruction which he had prophesied should fall upon the wicked city; and in the third, he enters, now the fortieth day, to bring a message of peace and forgiveness from the "High and Lofty One" to the repentant king and people. Professor Bridge, in setting to music this subject has once more made known his determination to allow no fetters forged by predecessors to keep him from the free use of any device his fancy may suggest. It is indeed refreshing to meet with a musician, one holding appointments in places where the tyrant precedent has ever ruled, who is not afraid to assert full liberty of thought and speech. Under the direction of the composer, the new oratorio was performed in excellent style. The soloists were Mr. Edward Lloyd (Jonah), Mr. Brereton (King), Miss Hilda Wilson (Princess), and Madame Albani (Queen).

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ON the 13th inst., Señor Sarasate will, in association with Madame Bertha Marx, commence a concert tour of some weeks' duration in the provinces. Orchestral concerts will, however, be given by the celebrated artist in St. James's Hall, on the 18th of the present month and the 3rd of November.

UNDER the direction of Mr. N. Vert a concert tour has been organized on behalf of Madame Marie Roze, whose artistic companions are Miss Lily Moody, Mr. H. Lane Wilson, Mr. George Pritchard, and the Meister Glee Singers. The troupe left town on the 29th ult., for the provinces.

Soon after his arrival in the course of next month from Australia, Mr. Santley will gratify Londoners by singing at concerts both secular and sacred in the metropolis; and will also fulfil engagements already made with provincial

societies and managers of musical entertainments. Mr. Santley's stay in this country will be only of brief duration, as negotiations on his behalf have been concluded by Mr. N. Vert for a tour in the United States during the forthcoming spring.

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The Guildhall School of Music opened its doors for the reception of students, entering for the present term, on Monday, the 22nd ult., when to the gratification of teachers as well as scholars, Mr. Weist Hill, happily restored to health, resumed his duties as Principal of the "School."

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PROFESSOR STANFORD is, we are told, preparing an oratorio, entitled *Eden*, for the Birmingham Festival of next year. Happily, the librettist, instead of holding the genius of the musician within the narrow bounds of Paradise, has allowed it liberty to scale the heights of "Heaven," and to fathom the depths of "Hell," before chaining it down to "Earth." That each region will be exhaustively illustrated cannot be doubted by those who admire the composer's works.

* * *

ACCEDING to a wish generally expressed, Mr. Henry C. Banister has published the paper, "Musician," read by him in July last before the South-Eastern section of the National Society of Professional Musicians. In his writings as well as in his life Mr. Banister exhibits the attainments and qualities of a learned and true musician. Mr. Henry C. Banister's Memoir of Sir G. A. Macfarren will be published in the course of the present month.

* * *

BESIDES performing a selection of national airs at Mostyn Hall, when the Queen of Roumania was honouring the company assembled there with her presence, Mr. John Thomas also played harp accompaniments to the recitation of poetry rendered by the Queen herself.

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THE thirty-fifth annual series of the Crystal Palace Saturday concerts will commence on the afternoon of the 11th of this month, when Mendelssohn's "Italian" symphony will be given; and Herr Hans Sitt, of Prague, will conduct the orchestra in a performance of his violoncello concerto in A, the solo part to be played by Herr Julius Klengel. Madame Valleria is announced as the vocalist of the afternoon. On the Saturday following the 18th inst., Mr. Leonard Borwick will make his first appearance as a pianist, at the Palace, in Schumann's concerto; and an overture, "Antony and Cleopatra," the composition of Mr. E. S. Smyth, will be introduced to the public; the symphony being Beethoven in C, No. 1. On the 25th inst., Mr. Couldry's new romance for the orchestra will be played for the first time, and M. Sautet will play in a violin concerto, the symphony of the day being Schumann's "Rhenish."

* * *

Good fortune attended the Eisteddfod held at Bangor in the first week of September. Happily, this institution is to a great extent free from party strife. In ancient times any attempt to turn it into a political gathering would have met with instant punishment at the hands of a Saxon or a Norman ruler. Unlike the Witenagemot, which dealt with laws and their administration, the Eisteddfod was compelled to restrain its discussion and its edicts within the bounds of poetry and music. It still leaves for the most part religion and politics outside the tent. At any rate they were fairly banished from the Bangor pavilion, whither the bards marched on Tuesday, the 2nd ult., in grand procession, after duly performing their "sacred rites" at the Gorsedd. Unmindful of wind and rain, they, with beaming countenances, joined the assembly over which Viscount Cranbrook was presiding. After his lordship's address, the Venerable Archdeacon Farrar delivered a speech, which afforded high gratification. Later in the day he supplemented that effort by an oration which threw the audience into ecstasies of delight.

At the outset, the reverend gentleman confessed his entire ignorance of the Welsh language; yet, though unable to interchange words with the people in their

own tongue, he, for all that, knew well how to set in motion their easily excited passions. He certainly proved himself an adept in the arts of flattery as practised at Eisteddfodau. No orator of the week spoke more fulsomely than he did of the attributes and deeds of the sons of Cymru; and in return the audience deemed no rhetorician worthy of being put in comparison with the English clergyman. He strung together a long list of Welsh names, including those of kings and queens, of soldiers and priests, of poets and scholars, of archbishops and deans, of architects and painters, all of whom he declared had shed lustre and glory upon the Saxon's realm. Catching the Eisteddfod fever, the Westminster divine contrived to out-herod Herod in extravagances of speech.

A very different tone prevailed at the meeting of the National Musical Association, over which Mr. John Thomas—Pencerdd Gwalia—presided. An address, both modest and hopeful, was delivered by Principal Reichel, and supplemented by a speech from the chairman, who, eschewing rodomontade, dwelt upon the need of improvement in the musical department of the Eisteddfod. As this is a practical question, it will, of course, escape the notice of cloud-dwelling bards. The choral contest, in which three societies were engaged, was decided in favour of the Birkenhead choir. On the second day there was a contest between Welsh choirs, the prize being £50 and a gold baton, provided by the gold discoverer, Mr. Pritchard Morgan, M.P. In the name of his fellow adjudicators, Mr. John Thomas declared the Canarvon Vocal Union to be the winner.

On the third day the ceremonials of the Gorsedd were witnessed by an immense number of people, the chief rite being the initiation of the Queen of Roumania into the ancient and mystic order. Escorted by the Mayor of Bangor, and followed by a vast multitude, Her Majesty proceeded to the pavilion to take part in the chairing of the bard, the Rev. Tudno Jones, whose ode had gained the highest honour at the disposal of the Eisteddfod. But, with sorrow let it be said, bardic glories vanished at the presence of royalty. Like stars of night at the sun's approach, the bedecked chiefs of the Gorsedd faded out of sight. The people had eyes for the Queen alone. The radiance of a crown blinded them to all things else in the pavilion.

The Queen paid on the Friday morning another visit to the Eisteddfod pavilion, and sent the audience wild with joy by reciting to them her own poems in the Roumanian language. Her Majesty, Carmen Silva, now queen of the bards of Britain, took the liveliest interest in the various competitions, appeared pleased with the Pennillion singing, and showed appreciation of the "englyn" composed in her honour. A concert was held in the evening of each of the four days, the artists being Mrs. Mary Davies, Madame Annie Marriot, Miss Julia Lewis, Miss Annie Griffith, Miss Annie Hope, Eos Morlais, Mr. Philip Newbury, Mr. William Davies, Mr. Ffrangcon Davies, Signor Foli, and the "Pencerdd Gwalia," Mr. John Thomas.

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THE Bristol Musical Festival to commence on Wednesday morning, the 22nd inst., cannot properly be called the seventh triennial meeting for the reason that two years only will have elapsed since the last took place. By experience it has been made plain to the committee that the year in which Birmingham and Hereford hold their festivals is in many ways a bad one for their gathering at Bristol. Hence the change. Whether it will turn out beneficial is at present not altogether free from doubt, since genteel Cheltenham has started this year, for the first time in its history, a festival in opposition to that of the ancient city. In the person of their musical conductor, the Bristol committee possess an advantage over rival organizations, for is not Sir Charles Hallé one of the most accomplished leaders of the day? Under his direction an oratorio will be performed on each morning of the festival. On the opening day, Gounod's *Redemption*; on Thursday, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; on Friday, Dr. Parry's *Judith*; and on Saturday, Handel's *Messiah*. With other instrumental works of distinction, the programme comprises Beethoven's Symphony (No. 8) and Schubert's Symphony in B minor. Sullivan's cantata, *The Golden Legend*,

call of the "loud bassoon" and its fellow summoners. It was no garrulous mariner that kept us outside the well-guarded door, but the ancient Sun, whose glittering eye held us in rapt attention. From out the unstained firmament the eye of the universe was fixed upon the earth, and so piercing was the gaze that shelter was sought in the shadows of the high cathedral tower wedged, as it were, into the near blue sky. For the moment we wished for the festival to perform its rites in the open, in order that the beauties of art might be blended with the glories of nature, that the soul might, through eye and ear, be brought into contact with perfect and all-prevailing harmony. For some time we busied ourselves with following the course of the musician's book undergoing interpretation at the hands of the orchestra inside the church, and with simultaneously reading the rich postscript of Summer's letter now laid before us. And it was not until the potent strain, "Rise up, arise, rise and shine," that, overcome with heat and fatigue, we sought rest in the nave of the cathedral.

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BESIDES performing a selection of national airs at Mostyn Hall, when the Queen of Roumania was honouring the company assembled there with her presence, Mr. John Thomas also played harp accompaniments to the recitation of poetry rendered by the Queen herself.

THE thirty-fifth annual series of the Crystal Palace Saturday concerts will commence on the afternoon of the 11th of this month, when Mendelssohn's "Italian" symphony will be given; and Herr Hans Sitt, of Prague, will conduct the orchestra in a performance of his violoncello concerto in A, the solo part to be played by Herr Julius Klengel. Madame Valleria is announced as the vocalist of the afternoon. On the Saturday following the 18th inst., Mr. Leonard Borwick will make his first appearance as a pianist, at the Palace, in Schumann's concerto; and an overture, "Antony and Cleopatra," the composition of Mr. E. S. Smyth, will be introduced to the public; the symphony being Beethoven in C, No. 1. On the 25th inst., Mr. Couldery's new romance for the orchestra will be played for the first time, and M. Sauret will play in a violin concerto, the symphony of the day being Schumann's "Rhenish."

Good fortune attended the Eisteddfod held at Bangor in the first week of September. Happily, this institution is to a great extent free from party strife. In ancient times any attempt to turn it into a political gathering would have met with instant punishment at the hands of a Saxon or a Norman ruler. Unlike the Witenagemot, which dealt with laws and their administration, the Eisteddfod was compelled to restrain its discussion and its edicts within the bounds of poetry and music. It still leaves for the most part religion and politics outside the tent. At any rate they were fairly banished from the Bangor pavilion, whither the bards marched on Tuesday, the 2nd ult., in grand procession, after duly performing their "sacred rites" at the Gorsedd. Unmindful of wind and rain, they, with beaming countenances, joined the assembly over which Viscount Cranbrook was presiding. After his lordship's address, the Venerable Archdeacon Farrar delivered a speech, which afforded high gratification. Later in the day he supplemented that effort by an oration which threw the audience into ecstasies of delight.

At the outset, the reverend gentleman confessed his entire ignorance of the Welsh language; yet, though unable to interchange words with the people in their

own tongue, he, for all that, knew well how to set in motion their easily excited passions. He certainly proved himself an adept in the arts of flattery as practised at Eisteddfodau. No orator of the week spoke more fulsomely than he did of the attributes and deeds of the sons of Cymru; and in return the audience deemed no rhetorician worthy of being put in comparison with the English clergyman. He strung together a long list of Welsh names, including those of kings and queens, of soldiers and priests, of poets and scholars, of archbishops and deans, of architects and painters, all of whom he declared had shed lustre and glory upon the Saxon's realm. Catching the Eisteddfod fever, the Westminster divine contrived to out-herod Herod in extravagances of speech.

A very different tone prevailed at the meeting of the National Musical Association, over which Mr. John Thomas—Pencerdd Gwalia—presided. An address, both modest and hopeful, was delivered by Principal Reichel, and supplemented by a speech from the chairman, who, eschewing rodomontade, dwelt upon the need of improvement in the musical department of the Eisteddfod. As this is a practical question, it will, of course, escape the notice of cloud-dwelling bards. The choral contest, in which three societies were engaged, was decided in favour of the Birkenhead choir. On the second day there was a contest between Welsh choirs, the prize being £50 and a gold baton, provided by the gold discoverer, Mr. Pritchard Morgan, M.P. In the name of his fellow adjudicators, Mr. John Thomas declared the Canarvon Vocal Union to be the winner.

On the third day the ceremonials of the Gorsedd were witnessed by an immense number of people, the chief rite being the initiation of the Queen of Roumania into the ancient and mystic order. Escorted by the Mayor of Bangor, and followed by a vast multitude, Her Majesty proceeded to the pavilion to take part in the chairing of the bard, the Rev. Tudno Jones, whose ode had gained the highest honour at the disposal of the Eisteddfod. But, with sorrow let it be said, bardic glories vanished at the presence of royalty. Like stars of night at the sun's approach, the bedecked chiefs of the Gorsedd faded out of sight. The people had eyes for the Queen alone. The radiance of a crown blinded them to all things else in the pavilion.

The Queen paid on the Friday morning another visit to the Eisteddfod pavilion, and sent the audience wild with joy by reciting to them her own poems in the Roumanian language. Her Majesty, Carmen Silva, now queen of the bards of Britain, took the liveliest interest in the various competitions, appeared pleased with the Pennillion singing, and showed appreciation of the "englyn" composed in her honour. A concert was held in the evening of each of the four days, the artists being Mrs. Mary Davies, Madame Annie Marriott, Miss Julia Lewis, Miss Annie Griffith, Miss Annie Hope, Eos Morlais, Mr. Philip Newbury, Mr. William Davies, Mr. Ffrangcon Davies, Signor Foli, and the "Pencerdd Gwalia," Mr. John Thomas.

THE Bristol Musical Festival to commence on Wednesday morning, the 22nd inst., cannot properly be called the seventh triennial meeting for the reason that two years only will have elapsed since the last took place. By experience it has been made plain to the committee that the year in which Birmingham and Hereford hold their festivals is in many ways a bad one for their gathering at Bristol. Hence the change. Whether it will turn out beneficial is at present not altogether free from doubt, since genteel Cheltenham has started this year, for the first time in its history, a festival in opposition to that of the ancient city. In the person of their musical conductor, the Bristol committee possess an advantage over rival organizations, for is not Sir Charles Hallé one of the most accomplished leaders of the day? Under his direction an oratorio will be performed on each morning of the festival. On the opening day, Gounod's *Redemption*; on Thursday, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; on Friday, Dr. Parry's *Judith*; and on Saturday, Handel's *Messiah*. With other instrumental works of distinction, the programme comprises Beethoven's Symphony (No. 8) and Schubert's Symphony in B minor. Sullivan's cantata, *The Golden Legend*,

is also down in the list of pieces for the evening concerts. For their interpretation, an orchestra of 100 executants has been engaged; while the "Festival Choir," numbering 360 voices, will be responsible for the choral music. The principal singers announced are Madame Albani, Miss Macintyre, Miss Hilda Wilson, Madame Hope Glenn, Mr. Edward Lloyd, Mr. Iver McKay, Mr. Andrew Black, Mr. Watkin Mills, Mr. B. Pierpoint, and Mr. Montague Warlock, the organist being Mr. George Riseley, and the choirmaster Mr. D. W. Rootham.

MR. BEST is detained in the Antipodes owing to postponements in opening the organ at Sydney. Having received further leave of absence from the Liverpool authorities, the renowned organist will stay to fulfil engagements in Sydney and other Australian towns. Mr. Best hopes to return to his duties at St. George's Hall, Liverpool, early in December.

MR. SIMS REEVES has, during the last month, appeared at the Covent Garden Promenade Concerts with great success.

THE Royal Choral Society will inaugurate its annual series of concerts at the Albert Hall on the 12th of November, with a performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

MR. FREDERIC CLIFFE conducted a performance of his symphony in C minor, at the Promenade Concert, on Wednesday, the 17th ult.

It is reported that Madame Adelina Patti is to receive twelve thousand guineas for twelve performances in Russia. Is it not consoling to know that folly is as rampant in the Czar's realm as in Queen Victoria's Kingdom?

EARLY in the present month Mr. Horace Sedger will open the Lyric Theatre with a performance of M. Audran's comic opera, *La Cigale*.

THE new burlesque, *Carmen up to Date*, by Messrs. G. R. Sims and Henry Pettitt, the music by Meyer Lutz, was, preparatory to production in London at the Gaiety Theatre, brought out at the Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool, on Monday, the 22nd ult.

DR. MACKENZIE's incidental music to *Ravenswood*, produced at the Lyceum Theatre on Saturday, September 20th, has won unanimous approval. On a future occasion we shall refer in detail to the several movements with which he has enriched the story.

THERE are many evidences in the new opera, *Captain Therese*, now performing nightly at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, of a determination upon the part of the writers of the libretto, not only to keep it free of ambiguous situations and equivocal utterances, but also to place it on a higher literary level than that usually occupied by comic opera. In endeavouring to estimate its worth, the difficulty will be lessened by at once acknowledging that the authors, M. Bisson and Mr. F. C. Burnand, have never allowed eagerness in quest of amusing subjects to swerve them aside from the course of propriety. And this implies steadfastness of purpose, since it requires not a little self-denial to forego the aid which a risky word or gesture so readily offers. What so easy to raise a laugh as an immodest reference? and what is laughter but the very end and aim of comic opera? To be dull here is assuredly to miss the mark entirely. And the trouble of it is that audiences have been so accustomed to jokes of a particularly racy sort as to be unsatisfied with quips and jests of a less broad and forcible kind. All the more credit is therefore due to those who prefer even failure to success brought about by such auxiliaries.

It cannot be said that the reprobates of the piece are put in the foreground. The libertine, Vicomte Tancrede de la Touche, is by no means a prominent character. True, he is seen making love to the waiting-maid, and also in the act of singing and dancing for the gratification of a vivandiere, but here, as far as the spectators are concerned, his alluring art ceases. They

are not allowed for an instant to gaze upon the features of the naughty Madame Mercédés with whom he has contracted a liaison. They hear her name bandied about so much that they become extremely curious to see the lady whose beauty is proving such a disturbing power. This privilege is, however, denied them.

No doubt it is well to keep out of sight disreputable parties, yet in carrying out a plot their presence is absolutely necessary. Have not our authors in undertaking the rôle of reformers unloosened at the outset the pivot upon which the wheels of the story ought to move? Have they not in the present endeavour to lift comic opera out of the slough in which it has so long floundered, and in the attempt to place it upon higher and safer ground, lost their balance and brought about inextricable confusion? Some such a misfortune has surely befallen them, for early in the first scene, when the recital of the Vicomte's vileness and meanness is ended, it becomes evident that the thread, which should have held the incidents of the story together, is escaping from the hands of the playwrights, and that the materials are beginning to fall away from order or design. All the characters, with few exceptions, are fairly decorous folk afflicted with a propensity to stray hither and thither, without purpose or motive. The heroine, Therese, and her aunt, Herminie, after donning the guards uniform, start off, accompanied by the family notary, disguised as a sergeant, and by the waiting maid, dressed as a vivandiere, to the camp, where they are joined by Therese's father, Marquis de Vardeuil, her cousin, and lover, Philip de Bellegarde, and by the bad Vicomte. They are ever busy tramping about the stage, but their incoming and outgoing seem to have no other object than the bewilderment of the public. The collaborators, M. Bisson and Mr. Burnand, have, to a certain extent, succeeded in their enterprise; they have produced a play without ribaldry, and we are bound to add without interest, sympathy, or charm of constructive skill.

Following the example of the librettists, the composer, M. Planquette, has appealed to that section of the public who fain would see comic opera identified with art. In the finale of the second act, for instance, he has shown himself capable of infusing such tonal life into the action of the stage as to make the whole scene partake of the completeness and unity of an organic structure. This certainly is a great improvement upon strains of France, which often have no higher purpose to serve than that of setting in motion the dainty feet of damsels affecting a paradisiacal costume. M. Planquette has aimed higher than usual in the orchestral scoring of *Captain Therese*. The overture gave earnest of that careful and effective orchestration which throughout the piece afforded the fastidious amateur satisfaction. Moreover, the concerted pieces, the trios and quartets, are cleverly written. No sort of merit, however, will redeem such a work from failure if tune of a striking and fascinating kind be found wanting. Now it is in this quality that the melodies are deficient. They are present in abundance, and all are agreeable enough, but none with witchery to haunt the public ear.

As regards the performance, the person most deserving of praise is the manager, Mr. Charles Harris, whose stage pictures are marvellously fine. Mr. John Crook must also be commended for skill in the direction of the music. As the artists—Miss Attallie Claire, Miss Phyllis Broughton, Madame Amadi, Mr. Joseph Tapley, Mr. Hayden Coffin, Mr. Henry Ashley, and Mr. Harry Monkhouse—are all nightly in full receipt of the flattering applause of the public, it will be unnecessary to add here our mite of eulogy.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Letters connected with the literary department of this Journal must be addressed to the EDITOR.

Communications intended for insertion will receive no notice unless accompanied by the name and address of the sender.

The EDITOR cannot undertake to return articles of which he is unable to make use.

All business letters should be addressed to the PUBLISHERS.

Advertisements should reach the Office not later than the 20th in order to insure insertion in the issue of the month current.



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TREBLE. 

ALTO. 

TENOR. 

BASS. 

ORGAN. 

Allegro $\text{d} = 116.$

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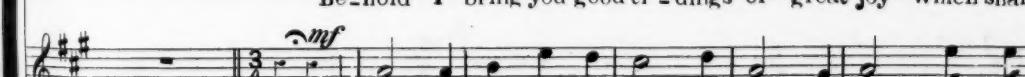
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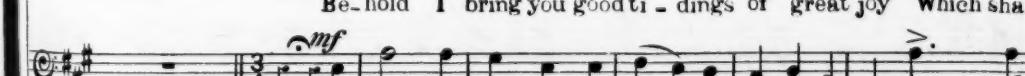
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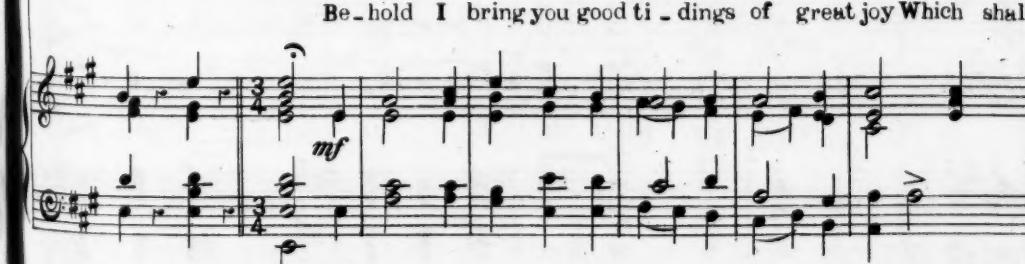
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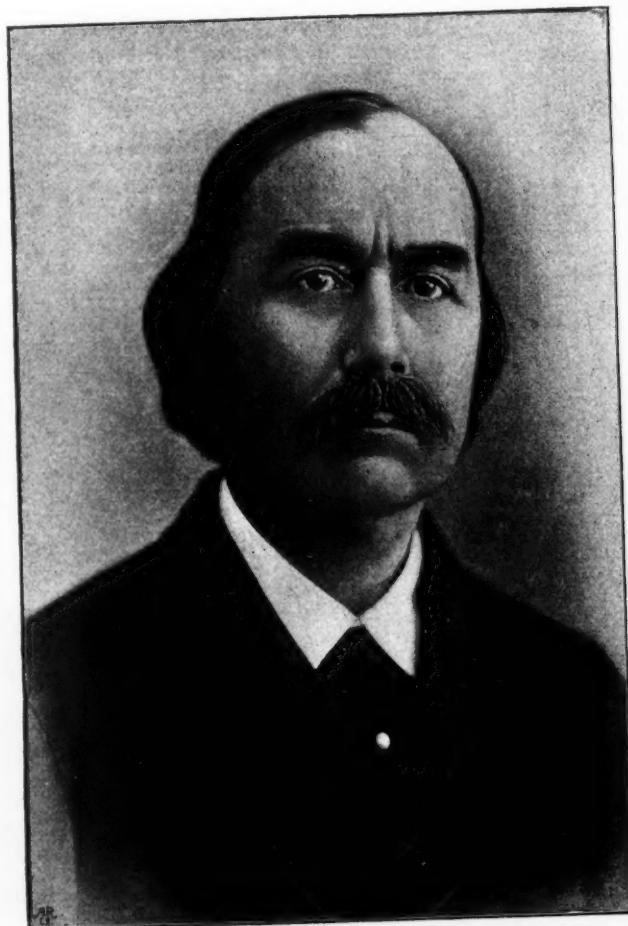
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"LUTE" NO. 94.

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John J. Horans

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